



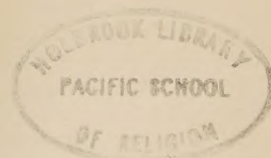
The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

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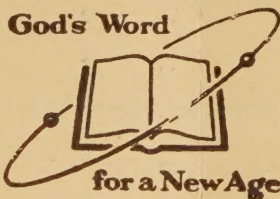
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BUSINESS MANAGER,
The South India Churchman.

'The Land is Mine'

Land has been a basic need and, therefore, also a perennial problem for man. It is true that other needs, too, have arisen and that man has become preoccupied with them also. It is true again that there are speculations about the possibility of discovering synthetic chemical substitutes for organic food. But, at the present time and in the existing circumstances, the increase of the pressure of population on the resources of land has made the problem of the proper distribution and exploitation of land more acute than ever.

There is a plain utilitarian and material aspect of the ownership of land or the right to cultivate it. Large masses of people have had to live on the produce of land—their own or others'. When all the available cultivable land in their own homeland was already being exploited by too many people, the surplus population migrated to other lands—such as tea and rubber estates in our part of the world and cotton fields and banana plantations elsewhere. But, apart from this, there are subtle psychological aspects of man's attachment to land. On the one hand there is the general unwillingness of men to leave the soil where their forefathers had lived or to part with even tiny possessions like Naboth's vineyard. On the other, the possession of land tends to make men greedy for more and to make them covet their neighbour's land and to claim exclusive proprietary rights to both ownership and use of the land without reference to any social obligations in the matter. Thus men have often fought and shed blood over the claim for little bits of barren land, allowed their land to lie fallow rather than let starving men cultivate them except on their own terms and refused to receive advice on making their land socially and economically more productive.

Time was when the rulers in any country were content to receive a share of the produce of land or tax in lieu of it and not to bother any further about land. Some of them did care to the extent of digging tanks or constructing irrigation channels. But, in the main, agriculture was left to the more or less satisfactory working of the law of demand and supply in relation to both the produce and labour. But with the development of capitalism in agriculture, governments came to be aware of both the merciless exploitations of the farm labourers by the owners of land and the failure of the latter to gear production to national needs. The solution for this problem in Communist countries has been to abolish private ownership of land altogether and to try different kinds of co-operative farm production. But while this has cut the Gordian knot of the problem of distribution of land it has not meant the end of that of adequate food production. We have heard repeatedly of men falling from high power in Russia because of the failure of their agricultural policies, of the disappointments over 'the great leap forward' in agricultural production in Communist China and spiralling prices and consequent risings in Poland.

Outside the Communist world both the problems of distribution and production continue to tax the ingenuity and earnestness of governments and technical experts. In our country, unlimited ownership of land has led to abuses of exploitation of landless farm labourers, hoarding, black-marketing and raising of prices. The small scale farmer has often been caught between high costs of production and lack of assurance of even minimal profit. The landless cultivator has had to face the hazards of underpayment, eviction, spells of enforced unemployment and heavy indebtedness.

A number of laws have been passed in the different States of our country regarding the maximum size of land holdings,



tenancy rights and obligations of landlords. From time to time land has been distributed to the landless, either through the Bhoodan movement or on Government initiative. Thousands of crores of rupees have been spent on land reclamation, irrigation projects, 'package' programmes and the maintenance and expansion of agricultural services. But it would appear that the benefit of it all has gone to the capitalist cultivators and that the lot of the common cultivator and labourer in the field has not improved and that the 'green revolution' does not mean prosperity for them.

Production has increased no doubt in terms of actual quantity, but not in those of the total needs of the whole country. Here again the achievement of the plans and other drives for greater production has not kept pace with the increase of population.

Shortage of food, rising prices, unemployment and complete lack of resources have made the poor in the land and their political champions in certain places in the country concentrate their attention upon the waste and mismanagement of cultivable land and to resort to unauthorised occupation of such land. Matters came to a head in the country-wide 'land grab' stir of 1970 which State governments and the Centre resisted with rather a bad conscience. We, too, might denounce the land-grabbers as thieves of property which is not theirs by legal right. We might say that political parties were trying to pose as champions of the poor and landless, only to gain their support at the elections. Again, we might point out the inconsistency of communists who decry private ownership inciting people to grab bits of lands for individual possession. But we must also realise that such a movement springs from the basic injustice of the denial of land and food to millions upon millions. And we must be able to see that, whatever may be the mixed motives of those who instigate such revolutionary movements, the end is in conformity with standards of justice and the basic needs for peace and social welfare.

What should be the attitude of Christians to such an agitation? Elsewhere in these pages, we are publishing a lengthy answer to this question by Mr. A. C. Dharmaraj. It is one that might shock Christians in general. For, in the main, Christianity has been bourgeois in its support of property rights and the traditional social order of the havenots slaying for the haves. But there are remarkable insights relating to land and its produce in the Old Testament. Within the Hebrew nation nobody was to be allowed to lose or to acquire land permanently even by sale. 'The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine' (Lev. 25: 23). If, compelled by misfortune, a man did have to sell his land, it would return to him during the year of the Jubilee. This was a provision for redistribution of land in every generation or two so that even families who had sunk into abject poverty might be able to make a new and hopeful beginning with

the Jubilee. When this right was withheld and the poor were cheated and downtrodden the prophets denounced the oppressors in no uncertain terms.

Even if some Hebrews had been obliged to sell their land and had also no means of buying enough food for themselves they were to be given the basic human right to the produce of the land. They could glean the fields after the harvest and the threshing-floor after the winnowing. The owners of the fields were positively forbidden to do the gleaning themselves.

One would have expected that these principles of fundamental justice and social responsibility would have become foundational in any Christian society that appeared after Jesus had underscored them in his own preaching as the essence of the spirit of the Kingdom of God. And yet the bitter irony of Christendom has been that it was left to societies and agitators breaking away from the Christian faith to take these principles seriously enough to build a new society upon them. And an even deeper irony is that Christians have actually expressed horror at what the Communists have done and even today throw their weight on the side of 'law and order' as against justice and the welfare of the people. This is not to say that Christians should all join or begin to support the Communists or the land-grabbers overnight. But Christians must now pause to think over both the muted violence and injustice inherent in the existing orders of society and the hunger and thirst for righteousness that is at the heart of many revolutionary movements.

Christians should also outgrow the shibboleths they have unthinkingly accepted for ages. They should not let themselves be mesmerised by phrases like 'the sacredness of property' or 'the state of life to which God has called us'. It is said that once a European asked an African what difference Christianity had made for them and that he replied: 'When you first came here you had the Bible and we had the land; but now we have the Bible and you have the land.' That is a caustic verdict on Colonialism of the 'Christian West'. There was no talk of the sacredness of property or of the right to it when the Christians acquired property but only when they wished to retain it. In the biblical view, it is not property that is sacred or the right to it, but only the manhood or the humanity of man. Just as no man can have a right to absolute freedom, but only to as much of it as is consistent with the rights of freedom of others, no man can also have absolute right to property, but only within the limits determined by the fundamental rights of all men to have a share in the resources of their nation.

In the light of the biblical insights being rediscovered

now, Christians have to reexamine not only the laws and traditions by which individuals and privileged groups own land—and any kind of wealth for that matter—but the ethics of particular racial or geographical groups enjoying proportionately very much more of the wealth of the world than those in poorer and more crowded lands. However, we should perhaps think of our own responsibilities first and ask ourselves what we, as Christians in India, may do towards increasing the national wealth that land can give and more equitably distributing it among all the people of the country.

In the first place we should give up the notions we have inherited from an unchristian faith in a feudal or capitalist order of society and try to understand the basic Christian principles of social responsibility. Secondly we must become educated to be able to discern the ethical values and disvalues mixed up in the policies advocated by each political party or ideological group so that we do not differentiate the parties or groups as being completely black or white. That way we shall learn to talk about ethical issues involved in programmes and policies rather than blindly approve of them or run them down wholesale. The whole teaching of the Church should be such as to encourage sound moral discernment and to discourage unthinking zeal for pseudo-Christian stances on public questions. We could, then, hope for enlightened support by Christians of land reforms that are calculated to bring greater happiness into the lives of a larger number of people. We could hope also that they would exercise sound judgement in everything else that pertains to land—prices, tenancy, taxes and amenities.

There are, however, two categories of Christians who can engage more directly in a Christian ministry in agriculture. Christian owners of estates, farms and fields can set the example for others in giving away land to the landless, in using their land for maximum production for social welfare rather than for maximum profit for themselves and in dealing with those who work for them as fellow-men rather than as 'labour' employed by them. Thus, it was only right that recently the Church, as the owner of landed property, was called upon by a group of Christian leaders both to exercise its ownership rights responsibly and to give away sizeable pieces of land as *bhoo dan*.

There are many Christians employed in agricultural departments. They have fine opportunities to instruct and help farmers so that the land may bring forth abundant harvests. They should serve with the same passion for 'making the desert bloom' as the Jews who settled on Israeli soil are said to be doing.

Fair Deal to the Tiller of the Soil

M. J. JOHN,* Katpadi

Most of the Parables of Christ are taken from an Agricultural-Rural Life Context. Man is close to God when he is close to nature. Mahatma Gandhi was very fond of rural life. Whether it was his programmes of 'Charka' or the Mass Movement, the objective was to involve the masses, 80% of whom live in Rural India.

With all the industrialization and the tremendous efforts for improvement, after Independence, 80% of the people still live in rural areas and earn their livelihood from the land. About one-fourth of the rural masses do not own any land, and another one-fourth till the land which they

do not own. Even the land-owning people have only a small percentage of areas that could be called economic and provide a comfortable living. When we speak of the Fair Deal to the Tiller of the Soil, it is the vast majority who are either marginal or sub-marginal farmers, tenant farmers, share croppers and the millions of agricultural labourers whose plight is uppermost in our mind. Land Reform is a burning question of the day—in setting land ceilings where it does not exist and revising it where it exists. Though the Government is in an all-out effort to implement the welfare state and the socialistic pattern and society

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concept meaningfully to the needs of the people, much remains to be done. Though diverse and unlimited are the problems relating to this topic we will deal only with a few salient areas in this Article.

1. The Ownership of land

Quite a bit of our good land that is cultivated is not owned by the Tiller. The people who earn a comfortable living by the other gainful employment hold the title. In most cases these people do not provide the wherewithal to the farmer who cultivates the land. While the owner of the land finds security in owning it, the cultivator has to struggle to eke out a living. Such cultivators who do not own the land are not able to share the benefit of the 'Green Revolution' and the Crash programmes of the Government. There remain extensive areas of waste land and cultivable waste not under forest which the Government should assign to the landless. Where the cost of reclamation is beyond the means of the assignees, even the reclamation should be done by the Government and the cost of the reclamation should be recovered over a twenty-year period, together with the land-tax.

2. Title to the land

A large percentage of the land cultivated by the people is owned by them, but the title of the land remains in the name of their grandfathers or the man from whom they purchased the land. The lack of a timely transfer of ownership handicaps farmers in getting loans from the Government for sinking wells and the development of the land. Provision exists according to the present arrangements of the Government for assistance from Commercial Banks, but the difficulty experienced for this reason by the farmers is great.

3. The Invisible farmers

It is natural that, when a person looks out, he sees only the hills and the mountains, and the vast stretch of plain land and the valleys do not catch the eye immediately. The whole programme of the Government by its design is for people's

participation. Only those farmers who are well off come into focus, and benefit from the programme. The vast masses are ignored and thereby denied the privilege of sharing in the 'Green Revolution'. In spite of 23 years of Independence and 20 years of democracy, it is only a small portion of the peasantry—the educated or the vociferous—who can move the Government and get things done.

4. Price Policy

Many are the efforts made to increase agricultural production. There does not seem any planned polity to guide agricultural production to meet the requirements of the country. The farmers, gauging the demand, produce goods as they see fit. When the produce comes into the market, sometimes they do not get even the cost of production. The present state of affairs of the sugar industry and sugar-cane production proves the point. The farmer who produces should be given an assurance that he need not sell the produce below cost of production to clear the debt and thereby starve the family. A guided policy of positive inducements with basic honesty in its implementation is absolutely necessary.

5. Supervised Credit

The agricultural debit is estimated to be about 1800 crores, most of which was used for unproductive purposes. With all the programmes to help the farmers much remains to be done to provide cheap credit, given timely with easy repayment plans linked to an organized system of inputs supply (improved seed, pest and diseases control, fertilizers, etc.), and technical advice designed to be within the reach of the common man. Only in such a context can the loans given be productive. It is the unproductive loans that have increased the burden and agricultural debt of the tiller.

Fair deal to the tiller will become a reality only when his problems become a burden on the heart of the administrators, informed sections of the society and the elite and when he is no longer viewed by the privileged as a source to advance the vested interest.

How to Get More from the Land

SAMUEL SUNDERSINGH,* Annamalaiagar

A country-wide shortage of food of a serious kind was never a common phenomenon in India right through history. Wars, pestilences, diseases and famine were effectively keeping the population in check, but now the population increases rapidly without a proportionate increase in food production. India has got only 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, but 14.6 per cent of the world's population live here. The great significance of Agriculture in the country's life and economy is well borne out by the fact that it is the premier source of national income, provides the bulk of our exports and is the basis for various Industries. To get more from the land we ought to provide just the conditions the plant requires and to search the world to discover the precise conditions best suited to our tracts. The general principles may be the same, but the modifications may make all the difference between success and failure. In the following paragraphs the technological possibilities and the practical limitations in our efforts at increased food production are examined.

The yield of crops in India is exceedingly low and

agriculture in India has become a deficit economy and to a very great extent the Indian cultivator labours, not for profit nor for a net return, but for subsistence. The causes of this traditional low productivity may be stated as follows:

(a) The subsistence type of farming and the consequent deficit in agricultural economy; (b) The poor equipment, inadequacy and obsolete nature of tools and inferior livestock; (c) Sub-division and fragmentation of lands, making difficult appropriate investments for modernisation of cultivation methods difficult; (d) Large areas of land under cultivated wastes and inadequate water supply restricting the use of chemical fertilizers and preventing fullest use of exploitation of natural fertility of the soil; (e) Soil exhaustion due to continued cropping for a long time without proper fallowing or manuring; (f) The menace of soil erosion which causes havoc to land; (g) Divorce between agriculture and ownership which introduces elements of exploitation and social injustice; (h) Rigid and oppressive land system and high rates of rent which discourage investments for

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permanent improvements in land; (i) Wide margin between the final price paid by the consumer and the harvest price received by the cultivator; (j) Restricted facilities for holding the produce which depresses the price in the market; (k) Bad communications and imperfect marketing which prevent realisation of a fair price for the produce; (l) Lack of adequate credit facilities and the resultant indebtedness of the peasant and his poverty; (m) Diseases of plants and incidence of insect pests which damage large quantities of produce; and (n) the fatalistic attitude of the farmer.

The result of research in our country has indicated the following technological factors to step up production:

- (a) Improved varieties of crops (about 10 per cent);
- (b) Manures and fertilizers (10-20 per cent);
- (c) Better cultivation and use of improved implements (about 10 per cent);
- (d) Plant protection (about 10 per cent);
- (e) Irrigation water (about 15-50 per cent).

Improved Seeds

Farmers are already well aware of the benefits of improved varieties and strains. The National Seeds Corporation of India has entered into this business in a large way, producing quality seeds which could easily double or treble the existing low average yields in the country. But seed multiplication and distribution on an extensive scale every 3-5 years poses both financial and administrative difficulties and any increase in price to meet such eventualities will make farmers resort to their own seeds. The improved seeds are not available enough in quantity and in time. Also use of optimum seed rate, time, depth, method and medium of sowing may tell upon the yield. So the full benefit of improved seeds can be felt only by the sustained efforts of the agricultural extension personnel.

Manures and Fertilizers

Most farmers use locally available manures but do not conserve them properly. Composting rural and urban wastes and green manuring are not practised to the extent they deserve. Mixed fertilizers are indiscriminately used at present and farmers are yet to be educated regarding the optimum and economic quantities and use of a combination of plant nutrients. Government should introduce quality controls in the Fertilizer Industries to prevent adulteration. Time and method of application are the most important factors to be considered in fertilizer application. Soil testing, one of the most neglected aspects of our Agriculture, has to be greatly developed to help and advise farmers individually on proper use.

Irrigation

With about four-fifths of the cultivated area in India depending on monsoon rains, fluctuations in production is inevitable with disastrous results on the agricultural economy. Dry farming methods and soil conservation measures are often suggested to increase production in low rainfall regions. As a long range measure, the yet untapped potential of Indian rivers, estimated at 80 to 90 per cent in various regions, has to be utilized to bring large areas of arid lands under cultivation. Quality of irrigation water influences production and if there is too much of salt concentration, it spoils the chemical composition of the soil as well.

Availability of water up to 10 months a year enhances practising multiple cropping. Growing two or three high

yielding non-photoperiodic short duration crops enables higher returns from the land.

Better Cultivation and Improved Implements

Deep tillage or frequent ploughings with inversion ploughs has not resulted in any tangible increase in yields. While improved iron ploughs and other labour-saving implements have a place in better farming, over-emphasis results in waste of effort. The programme of tractor cultivation is not at present either urgent or expedient except for land reclamation. The effect of improved implements is neither spectacular nor steady in normally cultivated areas and for recommendation of implements individual farms have to be studied if we are not to lose the confidence of the farmers.

Plant Protection

With the accent on high yielding varieties and multiple cropping, plant pests and diseases are increasing and plant protection measures have to be undertaken to reap full benefits. Facilities for servicing sprayers at the village level have to be developed and this will open a new avenue for agricultural graduates. The farmers have to be educated to use the right chemical against each pest or disease. Using the right concentration is economical as well as more fruitful. Some of the complications in production arise from the fact that we make things just too easy for the enemies of plants. Nice, juicy carrots growing in unnatural profusion invite the fly which detects them by the smell we disseminate as we handle the vegetables. We coddle them and spread the trouble. Perhaps we even replace casualties by setting a nice new plant in a diseased environment. The success of a plant mostly depends upon its suitability to withstand the environmental conditions and soil type of that locality.

Factors other than the technical such as socio-economic and administrative which impinge on agricultural production are land reforms, extension personnel, credit and marketing facilities, price incentives, etc.

The agricultural credit is now distributed to the ryots in an alarming and frustrating manner. When a farmer wanted to buy a pair of bullocks, the bullock credit scheme was exhausted and the peasant was forced to get the fertilizer credit which was insufficient to buy the bullock. Timely credit is to be encouraged. While people are investing large sums to put up buildings on relatively small areas and get high rents, relatively few invest similarly in agriculture and it is no wonder agriculture does not prosper or progress.

The minimum land ceiling regulation has driven away the big landlords from their lands to the cities with their capital. While there is a minimum land ceiling there is no ceiling on the money which a person can have. The mistake has been done and it is high time that the proposal should altogether be dropped.

We have the land, seeds, foods and intelligent ryots. But our systems and habits have excluded the majority of nutritious, enriching food. We have poorly developed fish and meat industry and our Director of Fisheries (1967) who does not eat fish praises the various tasty aspects of fishes. Both fish and meat Industries should receive subsidy and publicity from the Government. It is high time the people should realise the need for Birth control. It is condemned by some on the ground that it is unnatural! So is the use of spectacles. Publicity and promotion of family planning in rural areas are necessary.

The Art of the Farmer—Trials or Triumphs?

W. S. PACKIANATHAN,* *Palayamkottai.*

The Indian farmer is as confused at least as the Indian politician. Neither realizes, nor wants to realize, the dignity and excellence of his calling. His only goal is to squeeze out a living by hook or by crook. As for the know-how, anyone taking up farming, after dabbling in some profession for some years, will be sadly disappointed if he imagines that he can learn the know-how from those who claim to have done it for generations. The writer is one of these late entrants into the green revolution movement and his first experiences were tears. Did I say tears? Tares would be equally right. The one precipitates the other. But let me tell my story in some order.

I had come into possession of a four-acre plot of land just a mile out of town. Along one side of the plot runs a macadamized trunk road towards a seaport. On the other side, opposite to it and some 700 feet away, lies an 80 acre rain-fed irrigation tank. In the first flush of enthusiasm I privately christened my plot the Covenant Garden, the covenant being that only food grains would be grown on the plot. No cash crop of any kind—not even chillies—would be grown there. Even in farming some sense of dedication seemed relevant.

The tenant farmer who had been cultivating this land before me assured me that farming was in his blood and that no one could equal him in that calling. So, would I continue his tenancy or, failing that, engage him on salary basis? I agreed to the latter proposal. It didn't take me long to discover my mistake. He was a Christian and made loud advertisement of the fact. But excepting the cross that hung round his neck there was nothing Christian about him. The next man was older and I hoped he would be more honest and responsible. As an indication of my reliance on him I turned into his house (provided quarters) the first bag of paddy harvested after the land had come into my effective ownership. Incidentally, there is something very interesting about that first harvest.

It was in the spring of 1965. I had estimated the labour required for the harvest around fifteen—6 men and 9 women. On the morning of the harvest I was surprised to see 30 men and women standing with sickle in hand waiting for my arrival. On enquiry I was informed by my man that harvesting was a sort of 'open house'. Any number of hands might join in and the cultivator was expected to measure out in payment only so much paddy for so much acreage harvested. That seemed fair enough and I left off objecting. I did not quite understand, however, why anyone should agree work under such terms. The return would be so negligible! But my man and his gang had their own plans. I was amazed later at the ingenious tricks of pilfering they played that brought them much more than what I had bargained to give them. In the name of gleaning each had collected a tidy basket of paddy. And this 'gleaning' was carried on while harvesting, not after. Behind the harvesters followed urchins for whose benefit the harvesters let fall, in the fashion of Boaz' reapers, very liberal handfuls of paddy stalks. The reapers and their accomplices together had swindled more than fifteen men's payment in kind long before the harvest was over when the official settlement was due. The women tried to put on a very innocent look when the improvised pouches concealed in their sarees were exposed. Thus my first harvest ended with several regrets. I lost my trust in my second man also. I endeavoured very hard not

to judge Indian labour harshly. But my first experience and that of several subsequent years have convinced me that he cannot be trusted to do a day's job without strict supervision.

The next year chance brought me a helping hand in the person of Mr. V. I was pouring out my troubles to the District Agriculture Extension Officer with the hope of getting his advice on several problems. Disappointed, I walked out of the office when I espied Mr. V. walking out also. We had met earlier in the Y and he offered to come and have a look at my farm. He was a field officer attached to Rallis and knew a great deal about agriculture. He was impressed with the possibilities my plot offered. Just that year the new high yielding strain of rice, the I.R.8, had come into the market. The seeds were issued to selected farmers on experimental basis and we contrived to secure 5 kg., sufficient for planting on half an acre. From the day the seed is soaked in water for germinating to the day of harvesting, the farmer has to be vigilant if he wants to avoid tears for his final reward. I.R. 8 is susceptible to every pest that attacks paddy. The demand on manure and fertilisers is also great. Row planting has now become common, but in 1966 it was a novel operation drawing crowds of sight seers, many of whom had some nasty comments to make.

I went through it all—seed-disinfecting, row planting, inter cultivating, basal and top dressings, regular spraying and dusting, rat trapping, not omitting praying and hoping. V. came regularly on his now familiar Norton. He looked pleased and I look pleased. The vigilance was kept up; anything might go wrong any time, we both knew. And something did go wrong.

Just about the flowering time the plants were thinning. The leaves looked chaffed and clipped. Instead of appearing richly green and full the field appeared trodden and damaged. The tillers (additional shoots that grow from the roots) were as many as could be expected—as many as forty. Yet there were spaces as on a head that is turning bald. V. had gone on leave. I rushed to the District Agriculture office. There was a new man there. He was full of sympathy and ready to help. He came round to my field. Taking off our shoes we walked through the fields (there were eight of them—I.R. 8 on one and traditional strains on the other). As we walked, there was a noise of myriads of little creatures that fled before us in leaps and bounds. Sticking to the leaves we found chrysalises from which these creatures had emerged. There were also many caterpillars crawling on the tender flower stems. The D.O. pointed these out to me and ordered immediate dusting with 10%. This saved my crop from complete ruin.

Next year found me jogging along the path of more than less of intelligent farming with some confidence. There was still much to learn. But I had at least learned the elementary science of farming, especially rice cultivation, and I had produced in my own field sufficient high yielding seeds for cultivation in my entire plot. This planting I did and in January-February of 1968, my new man, my advisors and the members of my family had the pleasure of seeing cart-loads of paddy being taken to the storehouse. The harvest workers were vigilantly watched, but at the end of the day they were given literally double wages.

I wish I could end my story on that happy note, but, if I did, the story would not be complete. For one thing

* Mr. Packianathan was a teacher in Singapore before he turned to farming as an occupation during retirement—Ed.

I have not described my struggles and trials with other than rice crops. Rice is grown only during the wet months between October and January, when the irrigation tank I referred to earlier in my story gets filled up to supply the great amount of water rice requires. For another no story on Indian farming can be complete without reference to the periodic droughts. In my case I have had to face this for three whole years running one after the other beginning with 1968. The wistful looks towards the clouds, the unspoken prayers and vows, the nervous tension that builds up to frustration point as the wet months are nearing their term—how can they ever be described! Philosophising on this stage of the Indian farmer one may at least light upon some of the causes of fatalism, superstition and blind religious faith that the Indian farmer has become so well known for.

During the dry cultivation the chief problem—that is, if water is no problem—is the problem of tares. The hybrid *chulam*, a high-yielding variety of sorghum is a good producer provided the ground is kept free from other grasses that compete for the same space and food. Cyprus grass,

a kind of bulbous grass is a fast grower. In my plot they grow carpet-thick. They cause no botheration during the wet cultivation because they decay in standing water. But in just wet soil they proliferate very rapidly. Chemical weed killers are said to produce bad effect on the fertility of the soil. Digging them out by plough or hand seems to be the only way out, but that is too expensive and not thoroughly effective. Other tares there are, but they are not half so stubborn. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' was probably said with reference to weeds such as these. But I do not despair. There is no need to. With improved seeds, and mechanical and chemical aids that have come into common use today, farming has come to be a vocation suitable to a retired teacher, too.

One last word. The teaching and preaching section of our society ought to regard moral teaching as a sacred duty that falls on all of them. If they neglect this, honest labour, pride in work well done, good relation between workers at different levels will all be too soon forgotten. It is a sacred duty to keep these alive.

The Land-Grab!*

A. C. DHARMARAJ, N.C.C., Nagpur.

Nearly a quarter of a century has sped past and yet we are in the throes of striving hard to recognize ourselves as one nation; we are still luxuriating on our ancient glories and priding ourselves as the largest democracy in the world and pathetically indulging in tall talks of national goals not yet reached. Like the proverbial schoolboy who puts out his tongue at his betters to assert his own independence and superiority we are as individuals and as political parties, and as social and cultural groups, throwing stones at each other, albeit we ourselves live in glass-houses.

No one can gainsay the fact that to any outsider the whole nation appears to be mad or stupid and therefore wasting its time in costly childish games of hide and seek. Every section of society and every kind of institution seems to be in travail, shouting, screaming and breaking heads or windows! Something must be wrong somewhere. Nay; everything is wrong everywhere. A radical solution has to be found at once, or the Nation will cease to be a democracy and the law of the jungle will prevail. It is futile to become indignant when General Cariappa pleads for President's rule with the army to support him. Nor is it wisdom to condemn all these agitating people wholesale and heroically rattle the sword in the scabbard and say that only the governments are right and that 'the agitation is uncalled for and is a defiance of the laws' and that 'the law will take its own course'.

Within four days, including some members of Parliament of the S.S.P., P.S.P. and C.P.I. more than 8,000 persons had been put behind the bars and Tamilnadu topped the list with 3,584 arrests, the largest of these being in Thanjavur, 'the granary of the South', with 2,097 arrests. Mrs. Indira Gandhi had dubbed the 'land grab' movement 'unconstitutional and undemocratic' and the State Governments girded their loins to crush this agitation. It is interesting that the members of the Ruling Congress Parliamentary Party themselves urged in Parliament that the problem of land reform, especially distribution of surplus land, should be tackled on a war footing and that the ruling party should not lose ground to the opposition. This indicates that the ruling party has been helped to become aware of its shortcoming and to realise the urgency of the much-delayed land reform. And what is more, a Ruling Congress

member, Mr. Mohan Dharia, said in the Rajya Sabha that he would not hesitate to participate in the 'land-grab' movement if the Government failed to come out with a time-bound land reforms programme. He congratulated the Opposition parties for starting the movement which he said reminded him of the famous 'Dandi' march of the freedom movement. A New Delhi newspaper correspondent reported that 'most of the participants in the discussion of land reforms in Parliament have so far expressed their indirect support to it as they saw nothing morally wrong in it.'

This is said to be only the second phase of land grabbing. For, in an earlier phase, Punjab claims to have forcibly occupied about 50,000 acres of land. In Kerala, too in January 1970, according to the claims of A. K. Gopalan, while the CPI-led government was finding it difficult to distribute land through agreement between the *janmis* (land-lords) and the *kudikidappukars* (hutment dwellers), the Marxist party had helped nearly 1.5 lakhs of people to grab land and become land owners. The Marxist-led Farmers' Union included in their land-grab movement forcible fencing of land grabbed, plucking of cocoanuts in it, satyagraha before land-lords' houses and defiance of Court judgments when they went against peasants.

In West Bengal there was a mass rural awakening with the U.F. in power. They got over legal barriers and legislative loopholes by implementing land reforms by goading and supporting administrative machinery. Thus the peasants recovered with the help of the U.F. ministry more than 5 lakh acres of land which had been held by law under the illegal occupation of jotedars. In the last 4 days the SSP claims to have occupied 32,000 acres of land in 6 States raising the total to 42,500 acres. The CPI claims to have seized 10,500 acres, mostly in Bihar.

This is not an agitation. It is estimated that more than 100,000 people would participate in this. This is a movement, as good a movement as the Bhoodan movement of Vinobhaji, with only this difference that Vinobha persuades and the rich land-lord with a large surplus throws away a bit of that unmanageable surplus to Vinobha while the former uses coercive tactics. The fact that these parties make special mention of the farms of Ministers of the Union

* The article was written just after 'Stir' had taken place.—Ed.

and state ministers and of the P.M. and C.M.s and of large farms like the Birla Farm show that they are not only grabbing surplus land, but are trying to expose that the legislated ceiling of land has not been implemented by the legislators themselves and that these limbs of the law have been guilty of violation of law and glaring social injustice.

At a news conference in Delhi on the 8th of August, Jagjiwan Ram, the Congress President, was asked to explain why he had advocated forcible occupation of land by Harijans and Adivasis in a speech in M.P. He denied it and said that what he had stated was that where there was fallow land cultivable, but not put to any productive use by the Government, the landless could take possession of it and cultivate it. Even granting that this latter was what he advocated, it is a clear case of forcible and illegal occupation under the Government's interpretation. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander too! What is not law-breaking in the case of illegal occupation of fallow land is also not law-breaking in the illegal occupation of arable land.

Talking with reference to the infiltration of Communism into East Asian countries and addressing the Beirut meeting of the UNESCO, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan declared that the things which were happening in the neighbouring countries of China, Burma and Malaya must be a stern warning to us. He added, 'Our independence seems to have intoxicated and unbalanced us, our success has exposed our weaknesses more than failure. The attraction of Communism is not due to the intrinsic merits of the Marxian creed. Poverty and hunger are the fertile soil for the growth of wild fanaticisms. The peril comes from within. If our society is sick, if our youth is frustrated, if there are wrongs and injustices in the social order which are not corrected, if we compromise with corruption simply because it is in high places, if we are weak in defending democracy, we cannot complain if people are filled with despair and seek escape in new evangels.' The Land-Grab is such an evangel.

It has to be admitted that the Union and State Governments' attempts at reform have not met with success and people are dissatisfied as their woes are increasing. Even a worm might turn, and it has turned now in the 'land-grab'.

To take another example: Banking—small scale industries accounted for 40% of production in India yet banks gave them only 6% of their bank credits. It is common knowledge that 40 families in India control nearly Rs. 3,500 crores of national savings although the investment of these 40 families is less than 40 crores. Some individual magnates grabbed 64%, i.e. 1,800 crores for their big business while the small scale industry and agricultural enterprise languished.

Even after Bank nationalisation things did not change much, fast or adequately. Agriculture and small scale industry show an increase of only 5%, i.e. from 14 to 19% of the total advances. Sugar, Jute, Vanaspathi and the like snatch away 64% of the total advances of 4,200 crores while the weaker sections get only 380 crores. It is true that banking branches have grown. Nearly 1,100 such have been opened, 740 of them being in rural areas, and yet the banking credit does not help the small man. 'A study undertaken in Tamilnadu shows that percolation to the poor has been practically nil. The entire tenant class and peasants owning less than 5 acres do not get anything.' The rich farmer in the rural area pockets the lion's share.

The much-acclaimed Green Revolution perpetuates and fosters economic injustice. The rapacious rural rich landlord or his urban ally pushes ruthlessly into the countryside and all evaders of income-tax and black marketeers swarm the villages and build up large agro-industrial en-

terprises or farms and style themselves 'farmers'—tillers of the soil! The poor peasant and the landless labourer dare not raise their hands against these and the Law of the land will not and cannot lift one little finger to help them. Tensions mount and 'Land-Grab' is the inevitable outburst of such deliberate social and economic injustice. It is no wonder that the Union Food Minister exclaimed: 'The governmental machinery, reflecting the caste and class structure in the village, plays a supporting if not a subservient role in perpetuating the existing order' and the Union Home Minister exclaimed: 'Unless the Green Revolution is accompanied by a revolution based on social justice, I am afraid the green revolution may not remain green'.

And so I make bold to ask (1) whether there is no case for just violence when Governments and Laws abet this crime against human dignity and social justice? (2) How violent is their violence when the down-trodden and the exploited land-hungry dumb indigent millions deprived of 'fundamental justice' rise in rebellion and grab the lands from the cruel hands of injustice and exploitation, and (3) Is not the existing state of organised exploitation of the rich and the silent impotence or studied indifference of socialistic democracy more inhuman, cruel, and selfish than that of the helpless masses?

One of the leaders said in June 1968: 'There is imminent danger of violent upheaval in the countryside, especially among the awakened peasants if effective land reforms are held up any longer. The frustrated and bitter masses cannot be prevented from taking the law into their own hands unless the laws about home-steads and crop-sharing are expeditiously and effectively implemented. So far law has failed to act justly in the matter of effecting changes in property relations in the countryside. On the contrary, law is invoked to quell just peasant unrest and to impose on them an unjust order.' And this is exactly what has happened, and will continue to happen unless Government hastens to meet the crisis with vision and love. These movements, and the extreme Naxalite atrocities can never be put down by gun shot and tear gas and by enforcing law in fits and starts, but only by going to the root of the matter and striking at unjust monopolist capitalist exploitation and fostering genuine social justice and transforming the Central and State governments into genuine secular democracies rooted in selfless service and compassion.

It was said in Parliament by one of the members of the ruling party that Land Reform had a chequered career mainly because of the litigations by the landlords against the measures enacted by State Governments. This is not acceptable. The truth is: 'powerful vested interests have sabotaged land reforms with impunity. The Nagpur resolution on cooperative farming remains a dead letter. The ruling party went back on its promise of socialisation of agriculture. The country's food situation is being fully exploited by vested interests to have a virtual moratorium on land reforms.' 'The unplugged loopholes in the existing laws are such that reforms have become a mockery. Legal definitions of terms like 'family' and 'personal cultivation', are so loose and in keeping with our broad all-inclusive culture, that any group or persons—including an absentee landlord—is quite at home there!' 'Deliberate failure to impose an integrated agricultural income-tax as part of the central income-tax is another instance of partiality of law for the rich farmer, though the latter stands to gain considerably by national investments in irrigation and power projects. It is interesting to note that the rich farmers are steadily increasing their strength in the councils of the nation. Their strength has increased from 22.4% in the first Lok Sabha to 28% in the present house.'

The SSP and the PSP agreed to launch this land-grab movement on August 9th. Their demands are: (1) redistribi-

bute land equitably; (2) put a ceiling on personal expenditure; (3) tackle the unemployment problem; (4) reduce the age of franchise to 18. The SSP on its own would struggle for a new Constituent Assembly.

The land-grab programme involves seizure and distribution of all government owned and private surplus land. This movement according to the SSP becomes almost similar to the Gandhian idea of civil disobedience and, as a CISRS publication puts it, 'Satyagraha as a political weapon will be justified as long as oppression and injustice exists, and the use of it will be necessary in a country like India even though a Parliamentary system may be in existence. The inarticulate oppressed mass of people can be led to the path of socialism, not by Parliamentary action alone, but by planned determined mass struggles. This should be considered as an exercise in power—to reduce the power of evil and to increase the power of good—without which forces of feudalism, communalism and growing capitalism can never be defeated.'

Wolf Lodejinsky, an agricultural expert says, 'According to 1969 figures, out of a total population of 434 million 103 million own no land at all; 185 million operate less than 5 acres per family; 67% of the total rural population live in abject poverty on less than Rs. 200 p.a.' According to statistics compiled by National Sample Survey about 82% of India's rural population spend less than a rupee a day. In other words 363 million people out of a total rural population of 465 million subsist on a budget of less than a rupee a day. As a result of the green revolution landlords are trying to get rid of tenants altogether. This increases the gap and tension between the rich and poor, the landlord and the labourer. The land-grab movement by the labourer is the inevitable concomitant of the land-grab movement of the land-lord. It is easy from our dizzy heights of opulence and luxury to condemn the down and out as violent law-breakers and to forget that Law eggs the monopolist on to more and more exploitation. The Green Revolution is a boom and a boon to 'the fat kine' and a curse to the 'lean kine'. The law declares ownership of Land above a ceiling illegal and this law is observed only in its open and repeated breach. And it is immoral to brand the land-grabber as a lawbreaker, when he is only implementing what the Law will not or cannot do. Land-grab is thus the true implementation of land reform, whose intention is redistribution of land, for, equality or maximum diffusion in land-holding is an essential part of socialism.

It is worthwhile to recall what the Swedish economic expert, Prof. Gunnar Myrdal, says in 'Asian Drama'. He concludes that India is just neither capitalist nor socialist, just 'soft'. It is a case of dodging the issues, preferring to postpone decisions and evading the dogged pursuit of relentless action and avoiding challenging situations. He exposes bluntly the lack of social discipline and civic sense and national large-heartedness. Despairing of our democratic system, he says, 'Behind its impressive Parliamentary facade India is still far from being controlled by a majority of its people, far even from having its policies derived so as to be in the interest of the masses.'

Having seen through all the dilly-dallying of our Capitalist cliques and the Provincial and Central Governments and the inability of the National Development Council and the Planning Commission to persuade the State Governments to rise above their parochial outlook and their resistance to procurement prices, food zones, building up of surplus bumper stocks, agricultural income-tax, etc., in the larger interests of the national economy, Prof. Myrdal looks upon radical land redistribution in India as unattainable and pleads for 'a deliberate policy choice in favour of capitalist farming' and the abandonment of paying hypocritical homage to the slogan, 'Land to the tiller.' In the light of this expert's devastating conclusion is it any wonder if the tiller

of the land despaired of all hopes of securing a minimum to keep the wolf from his door and set about to play the wolf himself in grabbing land?

The National Sample Survey exposes the inequitable agrarian structure of our country. Government cannot offer any extenuating factor in defence of their hesitant and weak-kneed soft pedalling to which they are driven just in sheer fright of the landed proprietors and industrial magnates whose money will tell on the votes in 1972. The records of Japan and Taiwan in the post-war period illustrate how where there is a will there is a way. The U.S. occupation administration successfully carried out in Japan a radical land distribution programme because political exigencies demanded it. In Japan land commissions composed of representatives of tenants, owner-cultivators, and landlords in the ratio of 5:2:3 successfully implemented ceiling laws and liberated 80% of tenanted land. But it is a dismal tale in India. The moment rural ceiling law was in the air malafide transfers of land took place in the thousands. States have no record of the tenancies, so that tenants can be changed year after year. The law of 'Personal cultivation' of land can easily be circumvented. One authority even says, 'The State Governments do know of the prevailing widespread abuse of law. It is with their deliberate connivance that loopholes are provided for the landlords to walk through as they please.'

And so the poor man is at the mercy of power-cliques and power structures both at the State and Central levels. Reinhold Niebuhr said, 'Groups are more immoral than individuals.' These groups control the Legislature and the Executive and such groups can be broken only by mass-daring and mass-risking and mass-surfing which bring about Revolution. Here revolution is not violence or law breaking but 'creative disobedience' which exposes the evil and fights it by civil disobedience and a passive resistance.

Political institutions are human creations and subject to change. The laws of ethics also change. These are all conditioned by history which is a dynamic progressive movement. Lenin was not totally bereft of truth when he said that men's ideas of what is good or bad are determined by the economic conditions of the social organism of which they form a part. He was not therefore concerned with the morality of individuals but with that of groups and classes. The first decree of Lenin in 1917 was to make laws on 'peace, bread, and freedom'. He secured peace for his war-torn country and he nationalised the land to liberate the productive forces on the farm front for ensuring bread to the hungry masses. As somebody has said, 'There is no justification for man to believe that the ethical standards he lives by came down from heaven.' So when cliques and groups, capitalists and monopolists conspire with or cajole governments and leaders and hold democracy at bay, then ethics breaks down and blind and unimaginative adherence to this tradition-bound ethics leads only to perdition. Defiance and disobedience alone can break this wooden Law, the deadening Ethics and cruel Injustice and then it becomes 'Redeeming Disobedience.' Every country has rebels of this stamp who have become saviours and heroes—Jesus, Gandhi, Luther King, Camillo Torres, the Catholic priest who joined the Columbian guerillas, student agitators in several Western universities and a host of others who refused to be cowed down by the cry of 'Law and order in danger.'

As it has been wisely said, in some situations it is morally imperative to consider that the very Rule of Law requires that 'Laws may be defied in the defence of the Constitution, and the Constitution may be defied in the defence of human rights.' John Bennett says in 'The Christian as Citizen', 'Intelligent love for the neighbour must be concerned about the effect of economic institutions and policies upon persons. When it becomes apparent that any persons are hungry

or thirsty or strangers or naked or sick or in prison as a result of conditions which can be brought to an end by changing economic institutions or by corporate action of any kind, the Christian must translate the injunctions of the Gospel into such action.' The Indian citizen should honestly consider whether the land-grab is such a translation by the common man. And the Indian Christian should bear in mind the ironic comment that Reinhold Niebuhr made in 'Christianity and the social Revolution, that' the modern Church always has more pacifistic scruples against the use of force by a political group which is protesting against social injustice than against the violence of the State when it engages other nations in combat.'

In the words of John MacMurray: 'If Christianity is to become again a creative religion and rebuild commu-

nity, it must not only free itself from modes of thought and outlook which belong to the old order. It must disentangle itself from all those elements in society whose aim is to preserve the old order. In a revolutionary situation a creative religion is a revolutionary religion. The Christian church can recover its own essence when it stands unequivocally in the social order where Jesus stood; for the oppressed against the oppressors; for the poor against the rich; for the common people against the rulers, temporal and spiritual. It must become the instrument not of law and order but of spontaneity and love. It must lose its life of vested interests and social prestige if it is to lead to life eternal. It must stand in the eyes of the nameless multitudes as the symbol of a power that pulls down the mighty from their seats and exalts the humble and the meek.'

Inter-Religious Dialogue

T. K. THOMAS,* Madras

What is Dialogue?

In the religious sphere, dialogue is often confused with the discipline of comparative religion. This is a legitimate branch of intellectual enquiry which accepts religions as interesting and important phenomena and studies them scientifically and impersonally. The fruits of such enquiry can enrich the experience of dialogue, but the enquiry does not constitute dialogue. The collecting of data and the comparing of notes can at best only be a prelude to the experience of dialogue. Much of what takes place in the name of inter-religious dialogue, however, is precisely this, and many people have accepted the preparation for dialogue as dialogue.

Two of the best definitions of dialogue are to be found in the Report of a Consultation on Inter-Religious Dialogue that was held in Bombay in January 1969. The first describes it as 'a Collaboration of persons based upon attitudes of mutual acceptance and respect for each other's integrity and a shared desire for growth in truth'. It goes on to identify *hope*—'the expectation of possible new lines of development founded on the creativeness of two co-operating freedoms'—as the distinguishing characteristic of participants in real dialogue.

The second definition reads as follows:

(Dialogue) is an act of mutual communication which is more than merely to seek undersanding of doctrines on the intellectual level. Rather it is a sharing in religious experience (e.g. of God's presence, absoluteness, love, mercy), and so can be described in terms of worship, as the acknowledging of God as being present in each other. In dialogue, not merely two, but *three* are present, as Christ speaks to each through the other, as he progressively fulfills himself through their mutual communication. Ultimately dialogue is an act of communion, realised in a special way in service, shared prayer and silence.

Some of the words used in the above passages will give us an idea of what dialogue signifies. Among them are *acceptance, collaboration, communication and communion*.

Paul Devanandan once said that 'Dialogue, if it is to be genuine and fruitful, will, of course, start with the understanding that we agree to differ'. It should be added that genuine dialogue is also based on the conviction, not

always consciously expressed, that we differ only to agree eventually, and that this is God's will and purpose for us.

Towards a Theology of Dialogue

We began by saying that we do not as yet have a fully developed theology of dialogue. But we have indications of the way it is developing. One way to identify them is to let some of the recent statements from ecumenical councils and national consultations speak for themselves. We can only present a few rather arbitrarily chosen passages.

The Vatican Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions contains the following sentences:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often, reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.

The Church therefore has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.

The Uppsala Report on *Renewal in Mission* has a paragraph on dialogue. It reads:

The meeting with men of other faiths or of no faith must lead to dialogue. A Christian's dialogue with another implies neither a denial of the uniqueness of Christ, nor any loss of his own commitment to Christ, but rather that a genuinely Christian approach to others must be human, personal, relevant and humble. In dialogue we share our common humanity, its dignity and fallenness, and express our common concern for that humanity. As Christians we believe that Christ speaks in this dialogue, revealing himself to those who do not know him and connecting the limited and distorted knowledge of those who do.

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The National Consultation on the Mission of the Church in Contemporary India which met at Nasrapur in 1966 devoted considerable attention to the question of Christian encounter with other faiths. The related paragraphs from the Findings of the Consultation are of special interest to us :

Affirming our Faith, that Christ is the Lord of all history, we do believe that the whole of mankind, its cultures and religions, are embraced by God's purpose of salvation.

God is at work in all cultures and religions. At the same time, however, they are under the judgement of God, in so far as men in their religions rebel against the true God, worshipping false gods, exalting themselves over others and separating themselves from their brothers in the name of religion. Under the guidance of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we have to discern God's working in them and through them.

There is salvation only in Jesus Christ, and wherever men are redeemed from the power of sin and receive God's saving grace, it is through Him. In Christ all men have to be liberated from the bondage of sin. This saving work of Christ is not limited to the organised Christian Church. He works where he wills. It is not for us to judge the manner and place of his working. The Christian should be sensitive in discerning His presence and His doing.

Christian mission must be carried out in the spirit of dialogue, in which we are prepared not only to speak, but also to listen to what God has to say to us through the other. This dialogue should take place, not only where Christians meet non-Christians in schools, factories and offices, but also at the congregational level. Our congregations are often closed communities, and there is a great deal of fear in many congregations for an open dialogue with non-Christians. Christian openness to other faiths must be expressed in more positive ways than we have done so far.

Lastly, let us look at part of the report of one of the working groups at the Bombay Consultation which was organised jointly by the Roman Catholic Institute of Indian Culture and the Christian Institute. The group dealt with the subject *Gospel as Dialogue*. It described dialogue as being in some measure 'a demand of the Gospel'. The report of the group reads :

Dialogue between men finds its deepest foundation in the dialogue which God has instituted with mankind in Jesus Christ, who is at once God turning to man in self-communication and man's perfect response to God in obedience and love. Dialogue is sharing in religious experience. Christian religious experience is our experience of Christ. This is what the Christian can share with others in dialogue.

The partner has also something to give. For according to the Bible God spoke also to men outside the Judeo-Christian Tradition. His word therefore may in some manner have come to sages and saints and peoples of all ages and climes ; it may be found recorded in their sacred books. Contact with these scriptures, and dialogue with men who live by them can lead to a deeper and larger understanding of our own experience of the Gospel.

We should therefore learn also to listen to the other and to his witness—listening is surely a Gospel activity. God speaks to me through my neighbour's prayer, religion, hopes and loyalties.

In speaking of the Gospel as dialogue, we should take care not to restrict dialogue to its formal exercise which is occasional and of which only initiates and experts are capable. We should emphasise the dialogue that is going on or should be going on in the daily stream of life, in and through everyday contacts between Christians and others.

What are a few of the common characteristics in all these statements ?

First and most obvious is the relatively new recognition of the validity and worth of non-Christian religions. The old conception that Christianity alone is the *true* religion and that all other faiths are *false* and man-made is not any more evident. This appears at first as a downgrading of Christianity, but in actual fact it springs from a more radical affirmation of the core of the Christian faith.

The second point we note is that, implicit in these statements there is the distinction that is made between Christ and Christianity. If they claim less for Christianity, they claim infinitely more for Christ. The salvation that is offered in Him is universal, and wherever man is saved it is through Him and for Him. Christ is held up as what the New Testament claims He is—the Man for all men and the Saviour of all systems.

Thirdly, we find here the promise of growth, of mutual enrichment. Religions cannot save ; it is the Christ who is present and active in them that gives men life and salvation. Religious scriptures reflect His light and reveal His love. Through dialogue, therefore, we grow together in understanding and obedience. The basis of such dialogue is the fact that God has already initiated in Christ Jesus His dialogue with all men. Dialogue is thus seen as the imperative of the Incarnation. Its frame of reference is the persistently implied affirmation of Christ-centred catholicity—that He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.

Where will Dialogue lead us to ?

Dialogue is an adventure, undertaken in faith. It is the calculated risk that true commitment alone can take. Where will it lead us to ? It will lead us to our neighbours to whom our Lord has gone before us. Max Warren has put this in moving words :

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men's dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival. We have, then, to ask what is the authentic religious content in the experience of the Muslim, the Hindu, the Buddhist, or whoever he may be. We have to try to sit where they sit, to enter sympathetically into the pains and griefs and joys of their history and see how those pains and griefs and joys have determined the premises of their argument. We have, in a word, to be 'present' with them.

Will that be all ? We do not know. But that will surely be enough, to begin with. The implications of Dialogue are immense and its results can be revolutionary. We are called to be the Christian presence among other faiths. Whether we would be called upon to *participate* as well, one cannot say at present. To accept dialogue as the Christian way of life is to be challenged and surprised at every turn by unexpected possibilities of Christian obedience.

Rt. Rev. A. B. Elliott Passes Away

Twenty-five years ago when my wife and I first arrived in India we were met on Dornakal railway station by Bishop Elliott. From then we have enjoyed his fellowship, friendship, advice and encouragement. Yet twenty-five years is less than half the time that he has spent on missionary service. He arrived in India in 1912 and for fifty-eight years has served his Master here. On Sunday, 13th December, while going from his bungalow to church to preach at the Communion Service, he suddenly collapsed and lapsed into unconsciousness. Two days later he was brought to St. Mary's Hospital at Khammam, and he finally passed into the presence of the Lord on the evening of Saturday, 19th December.

Bishop Elliott was born on 5th February 1888 in Ireland, and was ordained in 1910. He arrived in Andhra Pradesh in 1912 and after a short time for language study came to Khammam where he was to serve as a District Missionary until 1924. From 1925 to 1934 he was a Lecturer and Principal of the Dornakal Divinity School. During this period Bishop V. S. Azariah appointed him as an Archdeacon, and in 1935 he was consecrated Assistant Bishop for Dornakal Diocese. After the death of Bishop Azariah, he was elected Bishop of the Diocese and on the inauguration of the Church of South India he continued to be the Bishop of the new Dornakal Diocese. In 1955 he resigned to become Bishop in the neighbouring Krishna-Godavari Diocese where he remained until he reached his Seventieth Birthday in 1958. He then officially 'retired', but that word had no meaning in his life. He took a short furlough and then returned for more service. He found this in the Retreat Centre at Alir, where for twelve years he was Warden. It was here while still active in service that he suffered this final heart attack.

So much could be written about his life and work. Yet I know that he would wish that nothing be said about himself and that his death be used as an opportunity to point men to the Master. Let us then first of all remember his devotion to his Lord. His was a life of constant prayer and service, of continuous study of the Word and of expressing it day by day in his life. His life was based on a deep knowledge of God's Word, and his Greek New Testament was his constant companion. I recall an occasion over twenty years ago when we were held up for a day and a half on the banks of the Godavari River waiting for a launch. I was running around most of the time enquiring about the launch or trying

to find alternative transport, getting worried all the time over Confirmation programmes running late, while Bishop Elliott sat under a tree reading some devotional books that he had brought with him for such an eventuality, and also his Greek New Testament.

His knowledge and devotion fitted him for his work in the Divinity School and there are senior clergy who remember with thankfulness their time under his training and instruction. His marked ability in Telugu not only served him well in his work but qualified him also to be an examiner in examinations conducted for missionaries. Although I never had to face him as an examiner, I recall his advice and help as he quietly pointed out my mistakes when he heard my early attempts at preaching.

All will remember his gentleness, quietness and kindness. Yet he was firm and strong when the occasion demanded it. I can recall only two occasions in twenty-five years when it could be considered that he was angry. One such occasion was when he was shown a picture taken of a missionary after she had died. He declared that he would remember her as she was when she was alive and serving the Lord and not as she was after the spirit had left the body.

When he commenced his work in this area he used a horse, riding from village to village over considerable distances. He was never very happy in a bullock-cart because of his height and preferred to walk or to ride a bicycle. I remember that when he was in his sixty-fourth year he chose to ride a bicycle sixteen miles from Dummagudem to Bhadrachalam rather than use a bullock-cart. On this occasion he had gone half-way when he came to a village where a crowd had gathered and were looking along the road where he had to go. They stopped him and told him that he could not go on as there was a tigress and her cubs on the road. He replied that he had to get back to Dornakal and rode on. At the next village he was met by another crowd. They were amazed to see him and asked him if he had not known that a tigress and her cubs were back there!

Bishop Elliott will long be remembered for his sympathy and practical help to those in trouble, for his encouragement and assistance to village congregations, for his learning, and for his devotion to the Lord. All who have had the privilege of knowing him and of serving under him will continually give thanks to God for his life and work and example.

L. A. PULLEN.

'Love and Justice in the World of Tomorrow'

1. The Consultation seemed to be in a penitential mood, for most of the participants felt that social service institutions and organisations of the Churches were often looked upon by Christians as meant exclusively to serve the members of the Churches only, and not others. This was powerfully brought home to the Consultation by Bishop Newbigin's keynote address. In view of this, *the Consultation emphasised the need for throwing open Christian institutions of social service to all, irrespective of religion, caste or communal differences.*

2. The Consultation felt that, in spite of the claim made by Christians that the Churches are rendering great service

to society, only a few Christians participate in the social ministry of the Churches. In fact, the social ministry of the Churches has come to be institutionalised and authority-based, lacking the foundations of love, sacrificial service, and a concern for social justice expressed by individual, ordinary members of the Churches at the parish and congregational levels. It was strongly observed by many that without the participation of individual Christians in some concrete form in the social ministry of the Churches, our institutions might remain only as lifeless monuments of Christian love shown by past generations of devoted Christians. In such a context, *the Consultation called for vigorous*

effort to mobilise Christians at all levels and galvanise their enthusiasm to participate in the social ministry of the Churches, inspiring sacrifice and commitment which would re-invigorate and revitalise our institutions of social service for a major break-through at this time of rapid social change.

3. The Consultation realised that at a time when rapid social changes are taking place, the Churches are challenged not only to continue their existing institutions, but also to start new kinds of work to meet the needs of our changing urban and rural communities. It was suggested that *a serious study of the problems and opportunities open to the Churches in the present socio-political-economic context must be undertaken* with a view to discovering the new frontiers where the Churches can do pioneering work.

4. It was said by several participants that the social ministry of the Churches was often carried on without any sense of social justice. As a result, social service had come to mean a sort of charity and doles given by the Churches to the poor and needy in society. It was emphasised that, at a time when the masses are awakened, and are demanding, as a matter of right, justice in terms of human dignity and sanctity of human personality, and a decent standard of living, the Church cannot afford to carry on its ministry on mere charity and doles. *The time has come for the Church to take cognizance of the revolutionary aspirations and rising expectations of the masses, and remould their institutions and their work on the basic recognition of the right of every individual to human dignity and justice.* Such a sense of social justice and concern for human dignity must lead the Churches to reconsider the purposes for which their buildings and properties are at present utilised, and how best they can be used more effectively and meaningfully to relieve the sufferings of the poor and needy in times of emergencies and otherwise.

5. The need for relating the social ministry of the Churches to the general economic development and social changes taking place in the country was greatly emphasised. Many participants thought that, though the resources of the Churches were meagre, they could be made to bring their impact on the nation-building programmes of the government and other public bodies if they were carefully and strategically deployed. It was pointed out that, in order to be able to influence the course of economic and social development and change, *the Churches should explore areas and possibilities of co-operation and collaboration with government and other organisations engaged in programmes of social and economic development.*

6. Serious concern was expressed at the lack of any worthwhile social service projects at the parish and congregational levels. *The need for appointing at least one professionally trained social worker in each diocese or Church Province was pointed out*, in order to help the pastorates and congregations to discover their mission in their respective local situations, and help them to fulfil it in a meaningful and constructive manner.

7. The Consultation strongly felt that the days of social work carried on by untrained social workers on an *ad hoc* basis were gone. It was realised that social work today is an extremely complicated and difficult job, requiring certain professional and technical skills. So it was emphasised that *the Churches must undertake the responsibility to train social workers and employ them, and also encourage such professionally trained Christian social workers to seek employment in secular concerns.* The Consultation strongly asserted that in the new situation prevailing in urban and rural communities, such professionally trained Christian social workers alone can give meaningful expression to the Christian mission of witness and service. The Consultation also

underlined the need for encouraging Christian young men and women to take up social work as a career for life. It was also suggested that Christian pastors should be provided with opportunities and facilities, through short-term refresher courses, to acquire the skills and knowledge of a social worker as it is they who are daily in contact with people in distress, and are confronted with all sorts of problems of material and spiritual well-being. It was hoped that the Community Service Centre would develop suitable training programmes for this purpose.

8. As it was expected, the youth segment of the Consultation was rather impatient with empty talk. They insisted that the Consultation should not end as yet another grand conference, where high-sounding platitudes about justice, love and peace were uttered. They wanted some immediate action by the Consultation as a symbol of its real concern for social justice and human dignity. They therefore proposed that all the participants should commit themselves and sign up on the spot to contribute 1% of their income to an 'Ecumenical Fund' to be made available for the social ministry of the Churches. This recommendation, made by the Commission considering service among the Handicapped, was taken up by representatives of the S.C.M. and other youth organisations; they pursued the matter to the point of confronting the Consultation with their own contributions made on the spot. After all this, acting on the recommendation of a special committee of five set up to deal with the question, *the Consultation resolved to constitute a joint committee to implement the proposal of a 1% contribution to the 'Ecumenical Fund'.* The Community Service Centre was asked to constitute the proposed committee with some Christian leaders living in Madras, enrol members, and be responsible for the 'Ecumenical Fund' until suitable arrangements were made by the NCCI at the national level. This fund would then be transferred to the national fund, which the NCCI has under consideration.

THE MAN WHO NEVER DIED

Can a house be occupied by itself?
No, it must house its Master. And,
he who keeps it vacant, invites
the ghosts to be his tenants.

* * *

Like an ass, when he has not
the burden of his master on his back
has to be tied to a tether,
so also the mind of man.

If
it wouldn't yield to the yoke of God,
it will be crushed under the burden of
flesh and bones!

* * *

The world has all the answers for our body.
But, when the soul questions,
only God can answer.

* * *

And,
is there another like God who is ever
at thy beck and call, the more
when you need Him most and own Him least?

* * *

And, the food of the inner man is not
the boredom of the breadful, but
the freedom of the graceful.

Worship in Youth's Idiom

Can worship mean anything to young Christian men and women faced with the challenge of building up a truly human and vital India? This question was posed to the group of twenty men and women gathered at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, for a seven-day School on Worship in early December.

The School started on a hesitant note as this experimentation was the first of its kind anywhere in the country. It called for an intimate participation of men and women representing the Roman Catholic, Church of South India, Lutheran Church of North India, Methodist and Mar Thoma Churches and also organisations like the All India Catholic University Federation and the Student Christian Movement of India. They studied the dynamics of worship, and worship services in Churches as they exist now. The participants were drawn from various parts of the country—Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Mysore and Kerala.

Performing on the assumption that church services often lack reality, dynamism, spontaneity and variety, various

aspects of worship were studied and forms of prayer services were prepared and critically analysed. It was a desperate endeavour to make modern worship express 'old truths for a new day in a new way'.

These experiments were conducted before a backdrop of interesting lectures on 'Worship in a Secular Age; Value of Tradition in Liturgical Celebrations; Music, Dance and Drama as Means of Religious Expression; Universal Worship and National Culture; Worship and its effect on Christian Living; Human Pre-Suppositions for Community Worship'.

Out of the workshops there evolved nine original and new forms of prayer services for youth, based on themes ranging from National Integration and Social Justice to Friendship and Faith. Some prayer services utilized modern communications media, some laid stress on spontaneity, but all of them were an expression of an involvement in the joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations of all men.

—JASON Y. ABRAHAM.

Announcements

1971 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

March 5

A NEW PEOPLE FOR A NEW AGE

The new humanity! What is it? Does not the word 'new' conjure up in our minds something like a new hair style or a new fashion in clothes, furniture or house decoration, a popular song, here today and gone tomorrow?

But the dream of the new humanity is as old as the Sermon on the Mount in which we find the teaching Jesus gave to his followers as a style of living. And long before Jesus came and spelled out this way in his own life, the Old Testament prophets were beginning to catch glimpses of a larger vision.

It is in the Isaiah prophecies that we find the startling claim that God is a universal God whose love encompasses all nations, even the enemies of Israel, and that it includes all people, rich and poor alike, with a special place for the prisoner, the outcast, and victims of injustice.

In the same way the new humanity that has its beginning with God and is revealed and embodied in Jesus Christ crosses all boundaries, whether they be of race, nationality, class, sex or age. (See Col. 3: 3 and Gal. 3: 28) It is the new creation coming into being in the midst of the old through the working of the Spirit of God. It is the kind of humanity that sets aside all the selfishness, pride and greed that belong to the old nature and puts on the new nature that comes from God.

The distinguishing marks of the new humanity are faith, hope and, above all, love. As the Letter to the Colossians expresses it, 'as God's picked representatives of the new humanity... be truly loving...' (Col. 3: 12, 14 Phillips).

In this age love calls the representatives of the new humanity to minister to the disinherited, to support those who strive for a better life for themselves and their fellows, and to lead the way in struggling for social justice. (Matthew 25: 34-40 and Acts 2: 40-47).

FEBRUARY 1971]

Barbara Ward, a modern economist, reminds us that although we have made tremendous advances in the field of technology, we have made no noticeable advances toward solving the problems of living together. We have the means to produce abundance for all, yet at least half the world goes hungry. Why is this? What are our priorities? Is God not perhaps calling upon us to put first things first in our search for ourselves and our task?

The possibility of a new world exists. It needs the total commitment of love to reach out and make it real. That is the task of the new humanity.

These ideas are reflected in the Service of Worship prepared for use on March 5. Will you be sharing in the world-wide prayer on that day?

—National Committee of the World Day of Prayer.

UNIVERSAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR STUDENTS 1971

'It is our privilege to invite you to join once again the member movements of the World Student Christian Federation in observing the Universal Day of Prayer on February 21, 1971. The World Student Christian Federation has been sponsoring this Day for over 60 years now. The Day has served to help Christian students around the world to remember their oneness in the Church of Christ and to commit themselves to witness and service in the name of Christ to their college communities. It has also served to acquaint the Churches with the needs of the Christian ministry in the area of higher education as well as with the work that the WSCF and the National SCMS have been doing in this regard for many years now. As you will agree, Christian ministry

(Continued on page 16)



Japanese Christians Laud WCC Race Action

Tokyo—The Central Committee of the National Christian Council of Japan adopted the following statement on September 24: 'The National Christian Council welcomes the September decision of the World Council of Churches' Executive Committee to take action for and combat with those peoples oppressed and deprived of their human rights through discrimination and exploitation in Africa and other parts of the World. The Churches and Christians in Japan join their efforts in supporting this World Council action.'

EPS.

Lutherans Urge All-Church Campaign

New York—The Commission on Evangelism of the Lutheran Church in America has voted to invite Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches to participate in the co-operative evangelistic campaign being arranged for 1973. Some 50 denominations and religious groups, most of them evangelical, will seek to make 'a united Christian impact on the North American continent'.

EPS.

Victory in Vineyards was long time coming

The signing of contracts by the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee with 26 table grape growers in California this summer was a victory in which Protestant and Catholic Church support of migrants played a vital part.

The Homeland Board and the Northern California Conference have long supported the California Migrant Ministry which, in addition to other aid to migrants, has worked closely with the Union.

Union head Cesar Chavez credits the Migrant Ministry with helping to keep his movement non-violent.

'I know this Union will some day gain power,' he said recently, 'there will always be the temptation to misuse that power. I want the Church to keep us honest.'

'Keeping You Posted.'

Ministry to Disabled Taught

Ministry to the permanently disabled is the focus of an experimental curriculum offered at the School of Theology at Claremont, California. The Course includes seminars and experience with out-patients and patients at nearby Casa Colina Hospital for Rehabilitation. Partnership of physician and minister is stressed. Seminary Dean F. Thomas Trotter, noting that almost every parish has members who are permanently crippled, says, 'Churches have given minimal thought to this aspect of their ministry.'

'Keeping You Posted.'

Church Leads Protest on Anti-Strike Bill

Hong Kong—Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen in this British colony have defied the governor and entered the political fray to protest against a draft Bill which would virtually outlaw strike action in industrial disputes.

The Churches say the Bill is an affront to social justice and would cause deep resentment among the workers.

The attack on the Government's plans to curb strikers' rights followed a workers' seminar attended by both Catholic and Protestant clergymen.

This is the first occasion here on which the Church has taken such a strong public stand against the Government.

Already the Colony's 300,000 Catholics have been told by their Church leaders to defy the Bill if it becomes law.

The Churches which organise almost all of Hong Kong's social welfare work were earlier this year warned by the Governor, Sir David Trench, not to get involved in politics.

EPS.

Archbishops Criticised For Boycott

Canberra, Australia—Anglican Archbishop M. L. Loane of Sydney was short-sighted in deciding not to worship with Pope Paul at an ecumenical service in Sydney on December 2, according to a Methodist Minister here.

The minister, the Rev. James Udy, said the Archbishop was 'theologically

incorrect and ecumenically myopic' in deciding not to worship because of theological differences. Worshipping together 'could lessen these

differences,' the minister said.

The official spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church in Sydney said Dr. Loane's decision was 'based on a misunderstanding of ecumenism.'

Other Anglican Bishops have said that Dr. Loane's decision 'was more an expression of bygone days' and that it was 'not representative of the worldwide Anglican Communion.'

Christian Educators to Meet in Peru

Lima, Peru—Over 300 Christian educators from 90 countries will meet here next July (8-21) for the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Christian Education (WCCE), it was announced this week.

Dr. Charles Malik, Lebanon, former President of the United Nations, and President of WCCE will be one of the major speakers at the eight-day assembly which will have the theme, 'New Perspectives for Christian Education'.

A plan to integrate the WCCE with the World Council of Churches will be presented to the Assembly and, if approved, the WCCE will cease as a separate body on January 1, 1972.

Among those attending the Assembly as fraternal delegates will be 20 leading Roman Catholic Educators.

—EPS.

United Church Unit Action Spurs Gulf Oil Warning

New York—A Gulf Oil Corporation warning that it may bring defamation charges against a regional unit of the United Church of Christ has thrown new light on the impact of Church resolutions in the social sphere.

Involved is the Ohio Conference of the United Church. In June, representatives of 230,000 members in that state supported a credit card turn-in against Gulf as a protest against the company's operations in Portugal's African colonies, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissao.

By playing a major role in the economy of the colonies, the Ohio Conference resolution said, Gulf Oil 'provides support for the suppression of the African National Liberation movements'. Portugal has long refused to free the areas.

—EPS.

Race Programme will Reduce Bloodshed, Kaunda Believes

London—The World Council of Churches' programme to combat racism will help reduce the bloodshed in the struggle for liberation in Southern Africa according to Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia.

Dr. Kaunda met with a delegation of the world Council of Churches here last weekend to discuss the World Council's anti-racism programme in relation to Southern Africa. Also present were other members of the delegation of the organisation of African Unity who are with Dr. Kaunda whipping up support for their 'don't sell arms to South Africa' campaign.

To critics who might say that World Council support for liberation movements was increasing the possibility of bloodshed in Africa, President Kaunda said he saw in this action the hope of reducing, in the long term, the amount of bloodshed made necessary by the struggle for liberation.

—EPS.

SODEPAX Critical of various Development Reports

Geneva—The joint Committee of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican that seeks to promote world justice, development and peace has said in a special report it can neither accept the total analysis of the recent international reports on development nor all their recommendations.

The Report 'Partnership or Privilege?' is an ecumenical reaction to the second development decade of the United Nations. It was prepared by a Conference near here earlier this year.

It takes a critical look at the Pearson report, 'Partners, in Development,' the 'Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development' by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations and the Tinbergen Report, 'Towards Accelerated Development'.

While endorsing the demands made by the international reports for a more whole-hearted sharing of world resources and for a reshaping of the economic, political and social structures, the ecumenical report says the rate of change adopted is much too slow and will maintain the existing 'enclaves of Luxury' in the developed countries. The report concludes that the United

Nations' second development decade programme will leave the problem of development 'substantially untouched by the end of the century'.

—EPS.

No Quick Church Union, Pope tells Australians

Sydney, December 2—Pope Paul VI told an ecumenical service in Sydney Town Hall tonight that the achievement of union between the Roman Catholic and other Christian churches would be a long and costly process.

'History cannot be written off overnight and the honest hesitations of sensitive consciences always demand our respect and understanding,' he told an audience including representatives of 11 Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox churches as well as Roman Catholics.

'In these days it is clear that ecumenical work is a continuing and costly task,' the Pope said. 'The reconciling work of our Lord was achieved through suffering and the cross. The unity which the ecumenical movement strives to serve has to be bought at a similar price.'

EPS.

Church Relief Teams Start Work in East Pakistan

Geneva—A 20-man relief team recruited by the East Pakistan Christian Council (EPCC) has begun work among the Victims of the Cyclone disaster in East Pakistan which, it is feared, claimed more than 250,000 lives in the Ganges delta area.

A Norwegian Church medical team is also at work in the area and has contacted more than 20 devastated villages. Some 1,000 people have been vaccinated and several emergency operations performed.

Reports from Church agency personnel confirm the Red Cross claim that 'relief operations are now in full swing'. An estimated 196 relief centres are distributing food, blankets and medical supplies.

In response to requests from Pakistani authorities, Church relief agencies are continuing to airlift material aid supplies to East Pakistan. The German churches have sent a field hospital and medical supplies, while the Scandinavian churches have provided more than

10,000 blankets, tents and dinghies to help in relief distribution. A radio technician has flown from Oslo to assist in communications with the stricken area.

DICARWS has been assured by Mr. Anisuzzaman, government relief commissioner in East Pakistan, that the churches are 'heartily welcome to take part in the rehabilitation of the affected area'. Cash and pledges received by DICARWS from churches in Australia, Canada, India, Netherlands, Sweden, Hong Kong and the United States amount to nearly \$100,000.

EPS.

WCC, Adventists Confer on Theology

Geneva—Another in a series of conferences between representatives of the World Council of Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist church was held November 23-25. The sessions, convened first at the WCC's headquarters here and then at the Seminaire Adventists near Collonges, France, brought together 12 persons from WCC member-churches and 13 adventists from nine countries.

Through joint Bible study and exegesis, the group gained a clearer working understanding of biblical inspiration held by the various communions.

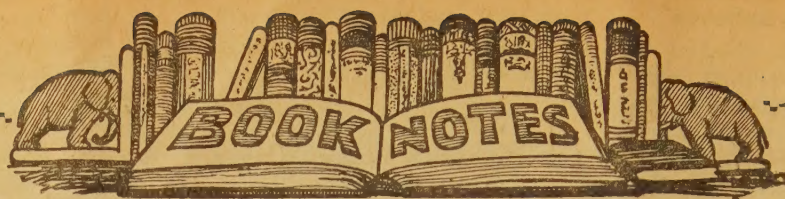
EPS.

No More Missionaries for Angola

New York/Toronto—The United Church Board for World Ministries and the Board of World Mission, United Church of Canada, have voted to suspend the recruiting of missionaries for service in Angola until Portugal gives reasonable assurances that they would be allowed to take language training in Angola and to live and work among the people.

The action came on the recommendation of the joint Angola Committee of the two denominations which cited the case of a new missionary granted only a 30-day visa that was not renewed after one month. A number of other UCC missionaries have been denied re-entry visas after home furloughs. As a result the number of missionaries serving the two boards in Angola has declined from 66 in 1961 to 12 in 1970.

EPS.



TOWARDS THE RENEWAL OF THE INDIAN CHURCH

By

ABISHIKTANANDA

Dharmaram College, Bangalore

Rs. 3.75

In our Christian Mission and evangelisation, we often tend to pounce upon non-Christians and to try impose the gospel upon them. But Abishiktananda's book helps us to take a different attitude towards non-Christian religions. If we are allowed to give a new title to his book, it can be *Hinduism Challenges Christianity*.

The author has picked up the best in Hinduism and has tried to adopt it into Christianity. The Hindu spirituality has a very important place in this book and has been given a challenging position. Thus we read, 'If we have failed in our mission, the fault is on our part that we have completely ignored the spiritual aspiration of the

Indian people'. The book stresses the necessity of contemplation in a Christian's life and also the starting of centres which will help contemplation. The Hindu theology can be said to be formed in contemplation. Hence, 'Theology comes from contemplation and leads into contemplation'. Hindus claim God-realisation through their ways of worship. Will they not be helpful to us also? It does not mean just borrowing everything Hindu. But our author gives us a very frank appreciation of all that is good in Hindu forms of worship and the Hindu way of life. He explains both the western and Hindu methods of meditation and then goes on to discuss Christian Yoga.

Abishiktananda is not just satisfied with theoretical explanations. He makes a number of practical suggestions. Those on a Hindu-Christian dialogue are very interesting. 'The Hindu-Christian dialogue will be at its best when carried on from both sides by people dedicated to a life of prayer and contemplation, and in places sanctified by the

use of Hindu scriptures by Christians and also proposes a study of Hindu symbolism. He is for an over-all change in our Church-structures and line of thinking, and to this end he suggests starting of study centres and stresses the need for proper ministerial training. New experiments in the field of religion need to be always encouraged. He also suggests setting up a 'mission' completely adapted to an Indian style. He has given a warning to the churches in India in these words: 'The enthusiasm in youth may be properly guided and, if simply neglected, it may lead the Indian Church into a crisis similar to that now happening in the West'.

The leaders of the Church must go very seriously into the matters discussed in this book and try their best to make use of the practical suggestions and apply them in the society in which they live.

Trichur.

K. M. THAMPAN

Announcement—(Continued from p. 13)

among University students has been highly significant and crucial, and at the same time difficult in recent years. We believe that the SCM and the Church need one another for fulfilling their Christian mission in the world today and we hope very much that the Day of Prayer will make the relationship stronger and more creative.

A special Call to Prayer and Order of Service has been prepared and copies may be ordered from the General Secretary, SCM of India, 2/E, Mission Road, Bangalore-27. We hope that a large number of congregations and institutions will join us in this Day of Prayer. In places where special services are not held it will be highly appreciated if Prayers for the WSCF, the SCM and the students in general are included in intercessory prayers during regular services on the 21st of February. We commend the SCM to your prayers and look forward to your active co-operation.

XIXth CENTURY OF ST. THOMAS

Both Eastern and Western Christian Traditions say that St. Thomas the Apostle came to India in 52 A.D. and died at St. Thomas Mount in 72 A.D., 5 miles from Madras City and was buried at an ancient Indian town called Mylapore. Over his grave looms large the Basilica of St. Thomas which is and has been a centre of pilgrimage all along the centuries.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India have decided to celebrate the XIXth Centenary of this Apostle in the year 1972.

St. Thomas first preached in the territory which we now call Kerala and established 7 churches there; then he came to the east coast of S. India and after some years of evangelical labours died at a place now called St. Thomas Mount.

St. Thomas may, therefore, be well called the Apostle of India and therefore this centenary, the 19th of his death, is an event of national importance, but it is also an international event since the Saint is an Apostle of our Lord. The main celebrations will be held on 7th, 8th and 9th of January, 1972, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Since January is one of the cooler months of Madras City, foreigners may not feel the heat.

We intend avoiding all ostentation and triumphalism, and intend having various study sessions on evangelization and its relevance today in different parts of the city in different languages, especially in Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu and, if many North Indians come, also in the northern languages.

As a lasting memorial we intend having some establishment that will continue to make the Gospel more meaningful. Some of our Committee have already suggested that we have an institution where the poor can always get one meal any day, like the Friendship House of Dorothy Day in New York and elsewhere.

Though the main celebrations will be in January 1972 throughout the year groups of pilgrims may come here and celebrate by themselves. Since St. Thomas is an Apostle we intend including in our celebrations all members of all Christian Churches, especially the Orthodox of Kerala who call themselves St. Thomas Christians.

Those who wish to have more information may write to the undersigned or to the St. Thomas Centenary Committee, Archbishop's House, Mylapore, Madras-4, India. All donations to be sent to the Finance Committee of the Centenary of St. Thomas.

Dhyana Ashram,
Madras-28.

ALBERT Z. MUTHUMALAI, S. J.

News from the Dioceses

MYSORE CENTRAL

St. Mark's Ninth Festival of Thanksgiving—1970

Total Income (after deducting expenses) to be given to meet the needs of others.*

Rs.

19,000

Rs.

I.	(1) Navajeevana Nilayam	1,500
	(2) Muslim Orphanage	1,000
	(3) Kasturba Memorial School for Blind Girls	500
	(4) Association for Physically Handicapped	500
	(5) Welfare Committee Association for the Mentally Handicapped	500
	(6) Y.M.C.A. Boys' Home	500
	(7) Y.W.C.A. School, Sheriff Gardens	500
	(8) Deena Seva Sangha	500
	(9) Al-Ameen Educational Society	500
	(10) Kushta Chikitse Sangha (Leprosy), Devangere	300
	(11) St. Patrick's Orphanage	250
	(12) Blind School, Whitefield	250
	(13) Ex-Servicemen's Association	150
	(14) Anatha Asrayam	150
II.	Prime Minister's National Relief Fund	7,100
III.	Asia Christian Service, Laos	2,000
IV.	(1) Refugees in Jordan	750
	(2) Refugees in Rhodesia	750
	(3) Relief for Nigeria	750
V.	East Pakistan Flood Relief Fund	2,250
		1,000

* The Editor would like to commend this noble act of giving to others.

RAYALASEEMA

Death of Mr. A. Solomon

Mr. A. Solomon was born on 18th August, 1889. He had his education at St. Paul's High School, Madras, and later at Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli. He entered service in the Bellary District in 1912. By dint of hard work he rose to the rank of a Second Class Magistrate. He retired from service in 1944. He slept in Jesus on 23-12-70.

Mr. Solomon was a regular member of the All Souls' Tamil Church, Bellary, from 1912 to 1970. He took keen interest in the activities of the Church. He preached on many occasions and assisted the Presbyters for nearly sixty years.

During the time Rev. A. E. Lokapathy was priest-in-charge, Mr. Solomon helped in extending the Church and in consolidating its property. He served as Secretary for over twenty-five years and also managed the Jubilee School for about 15 years.

O. SIVARAMIAH.

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